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ABSTRACT

This information packet for special education administrators addresses the team concept as a means of providing special education services at the local school level to mainstreamed students with mild handicaps and provides examples of such programs. In the first three sections, major purposes and goals of teams are reviewed, including provision of inservice training, direct teacher assistance, and improvement of student support systems. Five documents in the fourth section present examples of common team concepts and actual programs. These include: "Teacher Assistance Teams: A Model for Within-Building Problem Solving" (James C. Chalfant and others); "Breaking Down Classroom Walls: Establishing Building Based Teams" (Gil Bushey and Lynn Baker); "Building Support Teams" (Mike Horvath); "Building Team Guide" from Grand Rapids (Michigan) Public Schools; and the section on Student Support Teams from "Educational Planning for Handicapped Students--Procedures Manual" of the Minneapolis (Minnesota) Public Schools. Finally, six federal projects and programs related to the team concept are summarized, including name of a contact person, location, title, program description, and major objectives. (DB)

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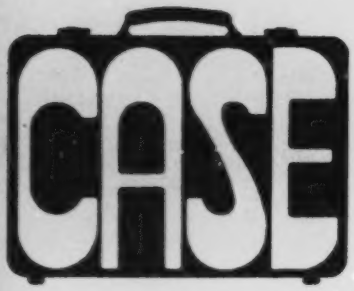

COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATORS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION, INCORPORATED

A DIVISION OF THE COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

CASE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION PACKET

THE TEAM CONCEPT
IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

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INDIANA UNIVERSITY

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1992

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1.0 Restatement of the Need for Information

The team concept in special education has become a popular method to provide services to handicapped students and to provide support for those professionals responsible for service delivery. The requirement in P.L. 94-142 and state laws for least restrictive enviornment, mainstreaming and for multi-disciplinary assessment has caused decision makers to look toward the team concept to assist in meeting mandates. Directors of special education and their management personnel have long recognized the need to involve both regular and special education personnel in a joint effort to provide optimum programs and services.

Even though the team concept has become a familiar method to provide support and services, there seems to be much diversity in their defintiion, in goals and objectives implementation. For example, a review of the literature finds that some teams serve a multi-dimensional function while others are emphatic about a single dimensional purpose. Because of this variation, it is not possible in this single endeavor to address all of the activities related to the team concept. The information in this packet has been delimited to those programs functioning at the local building level whose main population include mildly handicapped mainstreamed students. For purposes of clarity this packet has been divided into four major categories. First of all, some of the major purposes and goals of teams are reviewed. Secondly, a description of major research activities is provided so that the reader who desires more information may refer to these activities. Thirdly, examples of four common team concepts are included. These team descriptions have been selected because they are in oepration today, because they can easily be contrasted to one another and because there is a comprehensive description of their goals, purposes and implementation procedures.

Finally, additional projects and programs related to the team concept are abstracted and presented by major contact person, location, title and description and major objectives.

2.0 Team Purposes and Goals

While the team programs which are currently in operation are as diverse as the individual buildings where they are implemented, there seems to be some common elements among them. The major differences between the teams rests upon the specific goals they emphasize, the major audience of impact and the individual needs of the district or building to be served. In spite of these substantive differences, teams are designed to promote collaborative planning and a collaborative decision making process. Professionals meet on a regularly scheduled basis to discuss and make decisions related to special education requirements. Each of the teams has a designated chairperson and some manner of recording is operationalized. The successful team has previously developed its goals and objectives and the role of each of the members is understood by all of the participants. Some of the common goals of the team concpet are found in the following list:

2.1 To provide in-service training activities designed to meet the needs of regular and special educators who are responsible for service delivery in the building.

2.2 To promote direct teacher assistance and support for those teachers who have handicapped students assigned to their classrooms.

2.3 To insure improved student support systems and to explore program alternatives available in both regular and special education settings.

2.4 To facilitate multidisciplinary assessment practices and avoid duplication of services provided by ancillary and other staff members.

2.5 To reduce the number of inappropriate referrals to special education by exploring regular education options as the first line of intervention.

2.6 To provide classroom visitations for regular classroom teachers and suggest specific activities related to curriculum and behavior concerns for individual students.

2.7 To discuss and act upon student referrals made to the team by parents, teachers or the building administrator.

2.8 To enhance communication efforts between regular educators, special educators, the school administrator and other service personnel.

3.0 Description of Research Activities

Information for the material included in this packet was obtained through the following resources:

3.1 Review of the related literature available in state and local policy manuals developed by departments of special education.

3.2 Selected documents available through an ERIC-RIE, Educational Retrieval Information Center Search.

3.3 Selected federal projects available through a National Inservice Network SCAN computer search, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

4.0 Product Overview

The following team programs and materials are included in this packet to demonstrate variations in teams that are now operating at the local building level. These examples include the purposes and goals for teams which have been outlined in the previous sections.

4.1 Teacher Assistance Teams: A Model for Within Building Problem Solving, James C. Chalfant, Margaret Van Dusen Pysh, and Robert Moultrie, Learning Disability Quarterly, Volume 2, Summer, 1979, pp 85-96.

This article provides an excellent summary of a federal grant from the U.S. Office of Education which is being implemented in Arizona, Illinois, and Nebraska. The function of the Teacher Assistance Team is clearly to provide support and to "help teachers cope with children who are having learning and/or behavioral problems in the classroom" The major goal is to "obtain more efficient and effective delivery of special help to children by placing the initiative for action squarely in the hands of the classroom teachers." The Teacher Assistance Team project distinguishes itself from other traditional types of teams because it provides an ongoing forum to help solve daily concerns of teachers within a building. The summary article which follows provides a careful analysis of steps to be taken for the successful implementation of this type of team.

4.2 Breaking Down Classroom Walls: Establishing Building Based Teams, Gil Bushey and Lynn Baker Bulletin of the Indiana Association of Elementary School Principals, June, 1980, pp 70-78; Building Support Teams, Mike Horvath, 1980.

The article by Bushey and Baker provides a summary of one aspect of a larger federal project collaborated between Indiana University and Monroe County

Community School Corporation. During the second year of the "Consulting Teacher Inservic Project" it was recognized that an Instructional Support Team would enhance and improve the total project goals. Since this project was modeled after many aspects of the Consulting Teacher Program in Vermont, the consulting teacher plays an integral part in the development and implementation of this type of team. The goals listed in the article are primarily related to staff concerns and needs of the individual school. While some of the agenda items are related to the area of special education, one of the primary goals of this type of team is to avoid becoming just another special education team. This article provides a helpful perspective of the building principals role in the team. In addition, the inservice preparation and selection process for team members enhances the strength of this team effort. The second article in this section, "Building Support Teams" is simply a brief outline of the steps to be taken in the development of this type of team. A detailed account of this process is found in the preceeding narrative by Bushey and Baker.

4.3 Building Team Guide, Elementary Office, Grand Rapids Public Schools, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1978.

The Building Team Guide for Grand Rapids Public Schools provides a comprehensive outline of the function of a multidisciplinary team. The focus of this type of team evolves around individual student referrals who for the most part remain in regular education programs as their least restrictive environment. While many staff members on this team serve a special education role, one of the primary objectives of this team is to utilize special education programs and services only as a final line of intervention. Any given student within

a building may be referred to this team for suggestions and guidance in the improvement of his/her program. A strength of this building team lies in the role of the resource teacher who provides direct classroom visitations, suggestions, and materials for regular classroom teachers. Although the building based team concept was initiated through the special education office, it was operationalized and implemented by the elementary office. In addition, the reader will find a detailed description for the roles of each member of the team.

4.4 Educational Planning for Handicapped Students, Procedures Manual, Department of Special Education, Minneapolis Public Schools, 1977, III, Student Support Teams, pp 13-15.

This summary outline provides information relative to the Student Support Team concept implemented in Minneapolis Public Schools. The team concept here is one part of the total special education process for this urban district. This support team is most closely related to the traditional multidisciplinary team involved in the placement of students into special education programs. However, the intent of this team is to assure multidisciplinary assessment, to assure all appropriate alternatives are considered prior to special education placement, and to assure the involvement of approrpiate professionals at early stages. It is this type of team that is most common in the special education field today.

4.1 Chalfant, James C., Pysh, Margaret V., and Moultrie, Teacher Assistance Teams: A Model for Within-Building Problem Solving, Learning Disability Quarterly, Vol. 2, Summer, 1979.

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TEACHER ASSISTANCE TEAMS: A MODEL FOR WITHIN-BUILDING PROBLEM SOLVING

James C. Chalfant, Margaret Van Dusen Pysh, and Robert Moultrie

Abstract. Although regular classroom teachers can meet the needs of many mainstreamed children within the regular classroom setting, situations arise when teachers need assistance. In such cases, the classroom teacher often has no place to turn for help. Rather than addressing this problem in the traditional inservice format, the present study proposes a teacher support system model for classroom teachers. Based on a survey of perceived prerequisite skills and competencies for dealing effectively with learning and behavior disorders in the classroom, the Teacher Assistance Team concept was developed to provide a day-to-day peer problem-solving group for teachers within a particular building. The goal of the team is to obtain more efficient and effective delivery of special help to children by placing the initiative for action in the hands of classroom teachers.

Children with severe handicapping conditions, such as blindness or deafness, are usually identified quickly and placed in approrpiate educational settings. There are many children, however, whose learning and behavioral problems are not serious enough to warrant placement in special classes, special schools, or institutions. These children are usually maintained in regular classrooms. Although classroom teachers can meet the needs of many children within the classroom setting, there are situations when teachers need assistance. This assistance may take several forms. In some cases, teacher consultation with a colleague or a resource person may be sufficient. In other cases, the student might be taught by a teacher aide or removed from the regular classroom for a period of tutoring by special education personnel.

Many school districts have attempted to cope with handicapped children whose learning and behavioral problems do not warrant removal from the regular classroom. The following five major problems are usually encountered when trying to meet the needs of children with learning and behavior problems in the regular classroom.

First, many regular classroom teachers who are assigned the responsibility for mainstreaming mildly handicapped children (keeping them in the regular class) lack the training and confidence to manage or individualize for these students, or do not have appropriate experience to do so effectively.

Second, the high cost of supportive special services clearly indicate that there will never be enough funds to employ sufficient numbers of special educators to give direct supportive service to all children who need individualized help in our schools. This means that the burden of modifying programming for many special needs children, who are not eligible for special education services, will always be placed on the regular teacher.

Third, classroom teachers have no place to turn for immediate help. Special education is usually responsive to referrals, although several weeks or months may go by before a followup occurs. However, special education personnel are usually so busy with their caseloads that they seldom have time to go into a classroom and demonstrate for teachers how to individualize instruction for a handicapped child.

Fourth, teachers' day-to-day classroom problems are intensified when handicapped children, who were formerly placed in special education but who still need special help, are returned to the regular classroom. The pressure of meeting the needs of special students as well as the "twenty-nine other children" compounds the teacher's dilemma.

Fifth, in classrooms in many districts, teachers are referring 20% of their pupil population for special education services. This means that many teachers perceive 20% of their students as needing special services in addition to the regular program. This situation may reflect an overly concerned teacher or one who feels that students with individual differences are the problem of special education. Almost half of this 20% referred population will not qualify for special education services and will simply be returned to the teacher of the regular class. This phenomenon usually creates a certain amount of teacher resentment toward special education and

perhaps even toward the students themselves. The teacher may feel special education is unsympathetic toward the students and their problems. Teachers may respond to this situation by making fewer referrals and trying less hard to individualize instruction for special students.

In response to this situation, it was found necessary to create a support system to help teachers handle learning and behavior problems in the classroom. It was decided that, to be effective, any teacher support system had to:

A. Help teachers conceptualize and understand the nature of individual children's learning and behavior problems.

B. Provide immediate and relevant support to teachers who are trying to individualize instruction.

C. Improve followup and evaluation of mainstream efforts.

D. Increase attention to referrals at the building level; reduce the number of inappropriate referrals; utilize special education personnel more effectively.

DETERMINING NEEDED COMPETENCIES FOR INDIVIDUALIZING INSTRUCTION

In order to identify what kind of assistance teachers require to meet the needs of handicapped children, it is helpful to determine which skill competencies teachers and administrators believe are necessary. A survey of building principals and teachers can be conducted to obtain this information. For example, the Northern Suburban Special Education District, an intermediate unit of 23 districts headquartered in Highland Park, Illinois, conducted a survey in Highland Park District 108. The principals of eight buildings were asked to list competency areas which they believed the members of their respective staffs needed to deal more effectively with the learning and behavior problems of handicapped children. Their responses were compiled in a single list. The principals were then asked to rank order the composite responses. The competencies were listed as follows:

1. Techniques for individualizing instruction to meet needs of learning disabled/behavioral disordered children.
2. Familiarity with the characteristics of learning disabled/behavioral disordered children and ability to identify them.
3. Identification of resource personnel available to teachers (i.e., guidance staff, special education staff, paraprofessionals, volunteers) and how effectively to utilize such resources.
4. Human relations-improved communications and attitudes toward children (normal and "special"), fellow staff members.
5. Adaptive evaluation methods--realistic expectations for the learning disabled/behavioral disordered children.
6. Educational materials available for children with learning disabilities and/or behavioral disorders.
7. Theory and practice of behavioral modification.
8. Explanation of the learning process.

One hundred and thirty-eight teachers (K-9), 83% of the teachers in District 108, responded to a questionnaire asking what kinds of competencies they felt they would need to mainstream children in the regular classroom. Table 1 includes all competency areas mentioned by 30% or more of the teachers in each building. The list of response categories reflects districtwide needs.

A comparison of the expressed needs of teachers and administrators showed considerable agreement with respect to the competencies needed to individualize instruction for children. Priority was given to: a) adaptation of methods and individualization of instruction; b) behavior management; c) competencies in dealing with children's attitudes, motivation, and self-concept; d) improved communication between teachers and parents; e) familiarization with characteristics of handicapped children; and f) availability of materials. Although these needs were found in a suburban area, they are the same as those identified in the rural

TABLE 1
Competency Needs as Expressed by Teachers

COMPETENCY AREA	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F	School G	School H
Identification LD/BD	62.5%	50%	47.7%	43.8%	41.6%	57.1%	58.8%	57.9%
Behavior Modification	43.8%	41.6%		37.5%	66.6%		58.8%	52.6%
Hyperactivity	43.8%						35.3%	
Student Attitude	56.3%		33.3%					31.6%
Child's Self-Concept		33.3%			33.3%			
Motivation								36.8%
Group Dynamics	58.3%							
Group Discipline			33.3%					
Individualization			33.3%	31.3%		33.3%		
Remedial Techniques	50%					61.9%	41.2%	
Reading							41.2%	
Materials		33.3%		31.3%	50%	47.6%	35.3%	
Home Factors	56.3%		33.3%					
Alternative Classroom		41.6%						
Use of Special Services	31.3%							

area served by Educational Service Unit No. 9 in Hastings, Nebraska.

Implications

The results of the Highland Park survey failed to reveal any common pattern of teacher needs by district, building, or grade level. Even within a single building teacher needs seemed to be highly individual. These data made it obvious that the traditional after-school, half-day, or weekend inservice format would not resolve the daily specific concerns of individual teachers and administrators.

This was also pointed out to us quite graphically by one teacher who wrote diagonally across the questionnaire in red felt pen:

Whatever you decide to do. Please!

NO MORE INSERVICE!!!

This comment added another dimension to the puzzle. Not only was it difficult to provide a single inservice session, which would be of interest to the majority in attendance, but there was a negative, emotional reaction to the idea of "inservice" as a worthwhile activity.

A rereading of the teachers' responses to the questionnaire indicated that they seemed to be asking for some kind of assistance -- somewhere to turn. What seemed to be needed was a teacher support system, which had the day-to-day capability of helping teachers cope with learning and behavior problems in the classroom. But what kind of system could be devised to accomplish this?

An analysis of the teacher responses revealed five assumptions. The concept of the Teacher Assistance Team rests on these five assumptions:

First, in many situations a regular classroom teacher can help a child with learning and behavior problems.

Second, in other instances a regular classroom teacher, with some assistance, can help a child with learning and behavior problems.

Third, teachers learn best by doing, i.e., by actively working with a child who has a problem.

Fourth, there is considerable knowledge and talent among the teachers themselves.

Fifth, teachers can resolve many more problems when working together than by working alone.

These five assumptions point to a teacher-support system in which the focus of responsibility, decision making, and communication rests with the teachers themselves.

THE CONCEPT

The original teacher-support system model was developed in cooperation with personnel in the Northern Suburban Special Education District and Highland Park, District 108. The model consists of a peer problem-solving group of three elected teachers. The referring teacher becomes a fourth team member and parents are also often invited to be members of the team.

The function of these teams is to help teachers cope with children who are having learning and/or behavioral problems in the classroom. Failing this, the Teacher Assistance Team helps teachers obtain swift action on referrals. If classroom teachers experience difficulty fulfilling mainstream recommendations, the Teacher Assistance Team either provides direct assistance to teachers or helps teachers obtain followup from special education personnel. The goal of the Teacher Assistance Team is to obtain more efficient and effective delivery of special help to children by placing the initiative for action squarely in the hands of classroom teachers.

These teams are not to be confused with the more traditonal multidisciplinary teams made up of the psychologist, social worker, guidance counselor, school nurse, special teacher, regular teacher, etc. The Teacher Assistance Team functions as a day-to-day problem-solving unit for teachers within a particular building.

Specialists who serve on multidisciplinary teams for legal placement are invited to participate on a team as needed.

The concept appears simple and easily understood on the surface. The actual implementation of the concept necessitates a high degree of staff commitment and a careful introduction to an adaptation of the operation procedures in each building. Carefully developed, the concept has great applicability to the problems of individualizing instruction for children in urban, suburban, or sparsely populated areas.

A school district interested in establishing Teacher Assistance Teams must address the following six major questions.

1. WHO IS THE TARGET POPULATION?

The teachers in each building define the target population to be served by the team. In most schools, any child who is having difficulty benefiting from instruction can be referred to the team by his/her teacher. In schools with large pupil populations, however, it may be more effective to have more than one Teacher Assistance Team, each specializing in specific kinds of problems. In any case, it is important that the target population be made clear to the classroom teachers. Inservice training and checklists can be used to help teachers identify and refer children in need of special help.

II. WHO HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR REFERRAL TO THE TEAM?

Referrals can be made by a parent, the children themselves, or any staff member in the building. In those instances where members of the Teacher Assistance Team select the students to be served, sharp differences of opinion with the classroom teachers arise. If teachers are to follow up team recommendations, it is essential that they perceive the children as needing services.

III. WHO SHOULD SERVE ON THE TEAM?

Usually, the core team personnel consists of three persons with the referring teacher as the fourth and the parent as the fifth member. There are no hard and fast rules as to who should or should not serve on a team. Eligibility to serve on a team is best determined by having the regular teachers meet alone and discuss whether or not anyone but regular teachers should be eligible for team membership.

Staff may decide to elect three regular classroom teachers to make up the team. In some cases the principal has been asked to appoint the team members. The junior-high school team in Highland Park was elected by the staff and consisted of a learning disabilities teacher, and a math teacher. One school always invited the child's parents to participate as members of the team serving their child. Arrangements are usually made systematically to rotate one team member every quarter or semester so that others have an opportunity to serve and learn. The core of experienced teachers remains, however.

It is questionable whether or not principals should participate on the team. This is a sensitive issue. It may be difficult for teachers to perform freely as peers on the team when the principal also has the responsibility for evaluating and judging the teachers' performance during the year: will teachers refer their problems to the team? Speak openly? Admit failure with children? Feel threatened? If there is discomfort among the teachers, the team's functioning will be impaired. However, if principals can be accepted as team members it will provide them the opportunity to perform in their role as instructional leaders.

Concern has been voiced about the role of special education personnel on the teams. As one teacher said, "When teachers are outnumbered by specialists, the specialists tend to dominate and teachers don't get to share in the discussion and decision making." In order to avoid such situations, teachers seem to prefer a basic team of three classroom teachers, who invite specialists to participate

when appropriate. In some cases, specialists have been elected to teams but there is always the danger that they may be assigned the role of "expert." Teachers have the ability to create unique and effective suggestions and must be allowed and encouraged to do so.

The general criteria used to select Teacher Assistance Team members should include: a) classroom experience; b) knowledge of curriculum and materials; c) interest and ability in assessing learning and behavior problems and in individualizing instruction; d) supportive personality; e) ability to communicate with pupils, parents, and staff; and f) interest and ability to help fellow teachers. Team members should be genuinely interested in helping other teachers resolve the problems of individual children in the classroom.

IV. WHO SHOULD COORDINATE THE TEAM?

One person should have responsibility and authority to coordinate team activities. The coordinator may assume office in several ways: team election; teacher election; principal appointment; or by virtue of rank such as principal or vice-principal. The primary duties of the coordinator would be to: a) handle case referrals; b) set case priorities; c) schedule meetings; d) consult with referring teachers; e) arrange for taking recommendations and actions taken on each case; and f) ensure that followup takes place. In order to fulfill these responsibilities, the team coordinator should be committed to the concept, be willing to coordinate the efforts of the team, followup team decisions, and have the ability to lead groups.

V. HOW SHOULD THE TEAM OPERATE?

Each building should develop its own operating procedures. Figure 1 describes how the majority of teams operate.

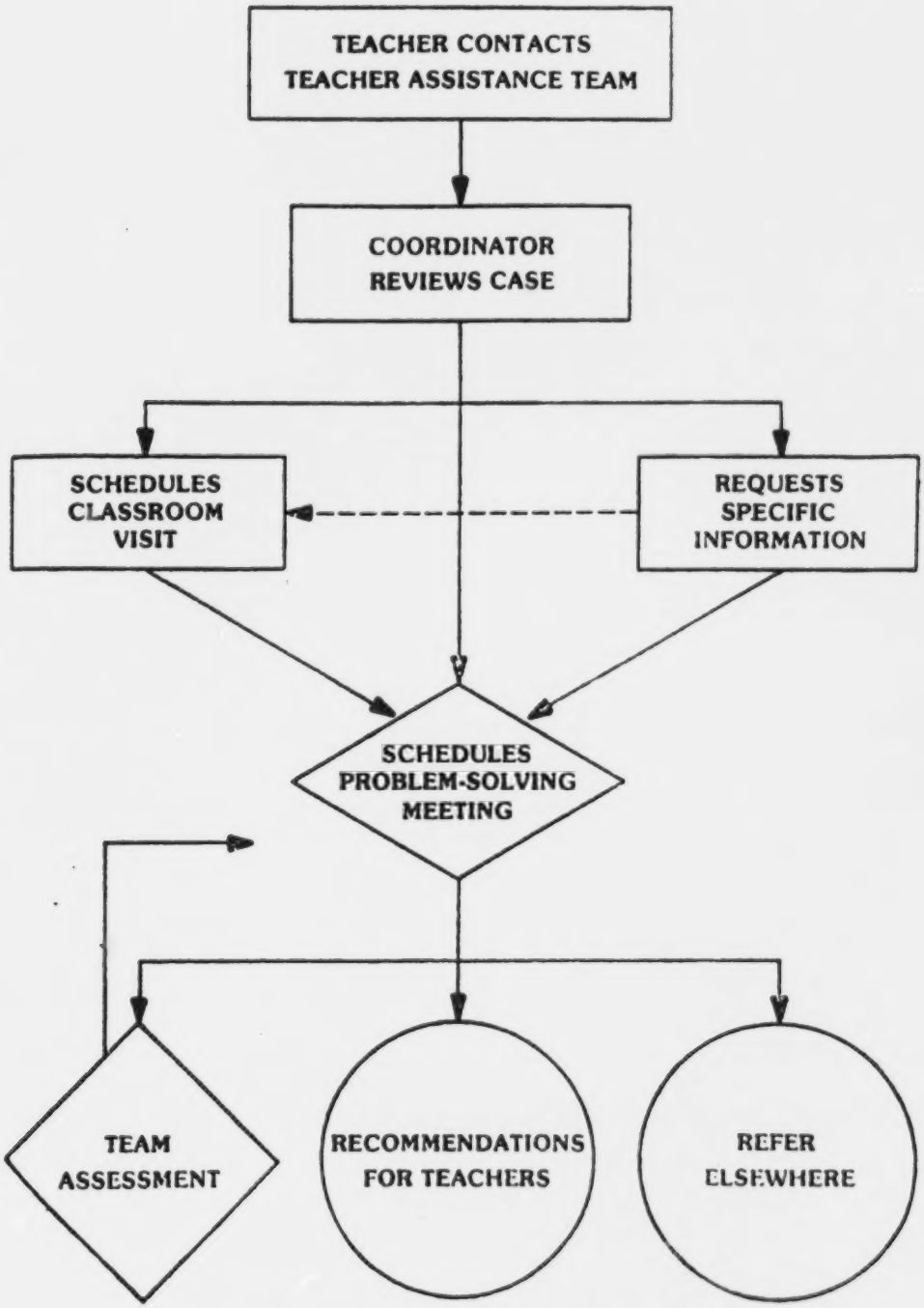

Figure 1. The Teacher Assistance Team

Teacher Contacts Teacher Assistance Team

When teachers encounter difficulty individualizing instruction, they should try to help the child as best they can. Teachers can use several strategies to think through a child's problems. The teacher can observe the child, review his/her cumulative folder, and develop an asset-deficit list describing what the child does and does not do. The asset-deficit list helps teachers identify areas of strength and weakness, as well as select objectives and procedures for intervention. If the teacher is unable to help the child, a referral is made to the Teacher Assistance Team for advice.

The referral form submitted to the team consists of four parts: a) a description of the kinds of performance desired in the classroom; b) a list of the child's strengths and weaknesses; c) a description of what the teacher has done to resolve the problem; and d) any relevant achievement test, psychological, or background information from the child's cumulative folder.

Coordinator Acts on the Referral

The team coordinator's first responsibility is to help the team members, including the parent who is a member of the team, prepare for the meeting by:

1. Reviewing the referral to ensure that it includes the necessary information.
2. Assigning a team member to observe the child in class.
3. Asking each team member to:
   a. read the referral
   b. identify problem areas
   c. study their interrelationships
   d. prepare recommendations for the meeting.
4. Preparing copies of a one-sheet summary and analysis outlining the child's problem.
5. Alerting each team member to the time and place of the meeting.

It is not necessary for everyone to work with the child or observe the child in the classroom before the first meeting. It is very useful, however, if at least one other person besides the classroom teacher is familiar with the child. This validates the teacher's concerns and gives him/her a knowledgeable ally with first-hand information in the team meeting. Contacts with the child can be made after the initial staffing and in line of team responsibilities.

It is also helpful if the coordinator tries to conceptualize the child's problems and identify the interrelationships between the child's behaviors and problem areas. This can be very useful to the team during their deliberations. A great amount of work should not be necessary, but as much information as possible should be reviewed before the meeting in order to reduce the amount of verbal input at the meeting. Prior preparation helps avoid the need for oral reviews, summaries, and recitations, and allows the team members to spend their time in problem solving.

Conducting the Meeting

To ensure efficient use of time the following three major functions should be carried out during the problem-solving meeting.

1. Orienting the Team: The coordinator calls the meeting to order at the appropriate time. The coordinator should a) review the reasons why the referring teacher requested the meeting; b) summarize the child's problems using the summary and analysis pages he has prepared; and c) make sure that everyone has a common understanding of the child's problems. This procedure saves valuable time by eliminating oral reporting and needless questions.

2. Establishing Team Objectives: The coordinator sets the expectation for the meeting by asking the referring teacher to state in question form his/her need for assistance. If the initial request is so massive that it is unrealistic for one session, the coordinator should ask the teacher which part of the problems he would like the team to accomplish during this particular meeting. The coordinator then turns to the team members and asks if they feel they can respond to the

teacher's request at the time. If the team feels they cannot respond immediately, they indicate why not and the coordinator negotiates the objectives for the meeting.

The team might address a number of different objectives, such as: a) generating procedures for teaching the child in the classroom; b) planning how to obtain more information about a child through observation or assessment; c) establishing reinforcement schedules and procedures; d) developing methods for evaluating children's progress; e) referring children to special education services; f) recommending retention; g) generating contracts between teachers, parents and children; h) fixing responsibility for followup action; and i) scheduling followup meetings. It is important that the coordinator establish short-range objectives for each particular team meeting, as well as the long-range goal of helping the child in his/her problem areas.

3. Problem-Solving Discussions: The coordinator should modify the way in which each meeting is conducted by determining the most effective method for achieving the objectives set for the meeting. In some meetings it may be desirable to have staff members simply describe their observations. Other meetings may be devoted to generating alternatives. A brainstorming technique in which members contribute their ideas can be used. Another strategy is to have team members state their recommendations and conclusions without discussion. Group discussion can be held after everyone's ideas have been presented. Then recommendations are made, written records should be kept of all decisions and recommendations.

Team members must learn how to participate effectively on a team, remain on task, speak succinctly, and assist the coordinator in moving the team toward the achievement of each meeting's objectives. Each "team" has to learn to function as a team. The principles of group dynamics are particularly useful in achieving a productive group.

Participation on the team is the method by which the referring teachers and team members learn from each other. When problems and issues arise which are beyond the competency of the team members, specialists can be involved, or programs can be planned to improve competencies.

The coordinator can help lead the team's problem-solving efforts by:

1. Stating each topic to be discussed.
2. Establishing time limits.
3. Appointing someone to record recommendations.
4. Helping group members speak to the point.
5. Summarizing relevant contributions.
6. Being alert to group and individual needs and helping each member contribute.
7. Scheduling followup meetings.

Recording Recommendations

During the problem-solving discussion, one member of the team acts as a recorder. When the team agrees to try implementing a specific recommendation, the leader phrases the recommendation and the recorder enters it on the appropriate form. Table 2 is a sample of the kinds of instructional recommendations which might be made. Similarly, if the team needs to collect more information about a child before instructional recommendations can be written, further assessment may be necessary. Table 3 can be used for recording assessment recommendations, such as: a) the assessment objectives, which are written in question form; b) the assessment procedures; c) who will conduct various aspects of the assessment; and d) when each assessment activity will be conducted. If carbon paper is used while completing these forms, the referring teacher may have a copy of the recommendations immediately after the meeting. The original copy is placed in a special file which has been prepared for the child.

TABLE 2
Instructional Recommendations

Child's Name_____ Long Range Goal_____
Grade Level_____
Teacher's Name_____ Date Achieved_____

Short-Term Objectives	Procedures	Measurement Procedures	Date	
			Inst Begun	Obj Ach

TABLE 3
Assessment Recommendations

Child's Name_____ Teacher's Name_____
Grade Level_____

Assessment Objectives	Procedures	Who	When	Date Completed

Implementing the Recommendations

The recommendations are carried out by the assigned persons. It is very helpful to maintain records of the effectiveness of the recommendations, the pupil's progress, and all contacts and actions taken on behalf of a child. A contact log can be kept in the child's file to help provide a written record and enable each team member to see exactly what has been done with each child.

Following up Recommendations

Followup meetings should be held on every child at specified intervals of six to eight weeks, or they can be initiated by the classroom teacher as the need arises. When the team's recommendations are successful and the child is progressing satisfactorily, the team, teacher, and parent have an opportunity to identify useful techniques which may have application for other similar cases. Followup is one of the keys to the success of the Teacher Assistance Team. When recommendations are not working, the automatic followup gives the team and teacher another chance to problem solve. When the recommendations are working, everyone is reinforced for their effort, motivation, and believe in the team process of consultation. In the event the team decides that the child is not progressing and the problem cannot be handled in the building, a referral may be made to Special Services for additional assistance.

VI. HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE TEAM?

The effectiveness of the Teacher Assistance Team was evaluated in District 108, Highland Park, Illinois during the period between September and June. Classroom teachers referred 203 children to the team. The Teacher Assistance Teams managed to resolve the problems of 129 children. It was necessary, however, to refer 74 children to Special Education Services for more intensive help.

These data mean that the Teacher Assistance Teams were able to handle 63.5% of teacher referrals within the building (see Table 4). Thus, the number of potential referrals to special service were reduced by more than

TABLE 4
Number and Percent of Children Helped Within Building
(K-9)

SCHOOL	NUMBER OF CHILDREN Staffed by Child Study	Helped Within Building	Referred to Special Education	Percent of Referrals Helped Within Building
I	41	19	22	46.3%
II	38	33	5	86.8%
III	19	11	8	57.9%
IV	30	19	11	63.3%
V	5	2	3	40%
VI	57	36	21	63.2%
VII	13	9	4	69.2%
TOTAL	203	129	74	63.5%

half. This allowed the special education staff to spend their time serving the handicapped children who truly require special help.

The Teacher Assistance Team Model offers a support system for classroom teachers by forming teachers into peer problem-solving groups which can help children, parents, and themselves by:

a) Helping teachers conceptualize and understand the nature of individual handicapped children's learning and behavior problems.

b) Providing immediate and relevant support to teachers who are trying to individualize instruction for handicapped children in their classrooms.

c) Improving followup and evaluation of mainstream efforts.

d) Utilizing special education personnel more effectively by providing a system whereby classroom teachers try to resolve problems before referring a child to special education.

e) Increasing attention to referrals at the building level; reducing the number of inappropriate referrals.

f) Creating a more positive attitude among regular teachers and administrators with respect to working with handicapped children who learn differently.

g) Generating alternatives which teachers and parents can use with children.

h) Giving moral and peer support to teachers in a setting where teachers can share their knowledge and skill.

Perhaps the contribution of the Teacher Assistance Team concept can best be summarized by Highland Park District 108 former Superintendent, Mr. Kenneth Crowell. In a letter to his teachers about the Teacher Assistance Team Mr. Crowell wrote:

> We've discovered in Highland Park that our principals are looking for ways in which they can be of constructive use to teachers. This

is their major function! They must provide professional responsibility or they are vulnerable to teacher complaints and grievances. It isn't enough to agree with a staff member that he or she has a problem child in his or her group. One must go further than that and offer the staff concrete assistance. That is a leadership responsibility and our administrators see the team approach as another vehicle through which they can better offer the leadership expected of them.

Most gratifying of all, the team approach provides a vehicle wherein the skills and remediation that apply to one child wash over and affect the teacher's instructional style in dealing with all students. And those skills are not limited to the case in question.

This team serves as a facilitating group of people whose joint efforts turn out to be supportive and directive to the point that your specialist's insights and perceptions receive a much broader understanding than simply the casual, one to one conversations that formerly took place. These still take place, but previously they were limited to that. Teachers, then, can address themselves more efficiently to the problems that the children in their classrooms are experiencing.

It is important to remember that we must support and reinforce teachers who are trying to mainstream handicapped children, as surely as we must reinforce the youngsters themselves.

DEMONSTRATION SITES

The Teacher Assistance Team model is being developed and studied in three states under a grant from the U.S. Office of Education (Grant Number G007801745).[1] Dr. James C. Chalfant, Professor in the Department of Special Education at the University of Arizona, is directing the Project.

The purpose of the project is to provide inservice training to regular classroom teachers, administrators, special education personnel, and parents to interact effectively on a Teacher Assistance Team and individualize instruction under the least restrictive environment -- the regular classroom. By providing a teacher support system in elementary, junior and senior high schools, staff can be trained on the job to help children attain full social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth. This project addressed the interface between regular education and special education in field settings.

Nineteen Teacher Assistance Teams were established during the 1978-79 academic year in Arizona, Illinois, and Nebraska. Additional teams will be trained during the 1979-80 academic year. The efforts being made at the demonstration sites will answer three important questions; how effective are the teams in helping fellow teachers? How much and what kinds of training is required to make a team operational?

FOOTNOTES

[1]The authors wish to acknowledge the following first-year Teacher Assistance Team sites and principals:

Arizona Sites

Litchfield Park School District

1. Litchfield Elementary School
   Pat Murphy, Principal

2. Scott Libby School
   Gary Ewert, Principal

Illinois Sites

Glenview District No. 34

3. Lyon School
   Richard Palumbo, Principal

4. Glen Grove School
   Bruce Johnson, Principal

Highland Park School District No. 108

5. Braeside School
   Gregory Mullen, Principal

6. Sherwood School
   Allen Trevor, Principal

7. Red Oak School
   Robert Dean, Principal
   Contact person:
   Dr. Robert Moultrie
   Director, Dept. of Pupil Personnel Services
   Highland Park, Illinois

La Grange-Highlands District No. 106

8-9. Highlands Elementary School
   (Primary Team) (Intermediate Team)
   Zenda-Gray Nemec, Principal

10. Highland Junior High School
    Arthur Grundke, Principal

Nebraska Sites

11. Aurora Public Schools
    John Seifried, Assistant Principal

12. Doniphan Public Schools
    Gayle Thompson, Principal

13. Roseland Public Schools
    Gary Rasmussen, Superintendent

14. Clay Center Public Schools
    Bill Silvy, Principal

15. Harvard Public Schools
    Roy F. Laue, Superintendent

Hastings Public Schools

16. Watson Elementary School
    Harvey Penning, Principal

17. Longfellow Elementary School
    Ken Wiederspan, Principal

18. Alcott Elementary School
    Jack Horsham

19. Lincoln Elementary School
    Lucille Cotner, Principal
    Contact persons:
    Pauline Collier
    Director of Instruction
    Hastings Public Schools
    Polly Feis
    Director of Special Education
    Dick Fuehrer
    Supervisor

4.2 Bushey, Gil and Baker, Lynn, Breaking Down Classroom Walls: Establishing Building Based Teams, edited by Burrello, L. C. and Caulkins, S. M. in Professional Bulletin of the Indiana Association of Elementary School Principals, June, 1980.

and

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BREAKING DOWN CLASSROOM WALLS: ESTABLISHING BUILDING BASED TEAMS

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For many years, administrators have believed in and supported the concept of democratic involvement of teachers in the educational process. Experience has shown that shared participation provides the cohesiveness which binds individual efforts of staff members into an attitude of oneness. The cooperative endeavors of teachers and administrators pay a multitude of dividends which enrich the educational experiences of children and, at the same time, reduce frustrations which lead to educator burn-out for both teachers and principals. Despite these realizations, many schools continue to function in a segmented manner, with pockets of excellence existing in isolation (and unrecognized). For a variety of reasons, principals find it difficult to motivate teachers to become involved in a positive exchange of mutually beneficial ideas and suggestions.

At Binford Middle School in Bloomington, Indiana a real need existed to build team spirit among staff members; to provide teachers an opportunity to work together in isolating problems and carrying out proposed solutions in an attitude of mutual trust and understanding. Some 585 students were served by a dedicated group of 38 professional staff members, most of whom were individualists, facing similar problems alone every day. Although a number of administrative committees existed, the major forum for expression

of concerns and gaining some degree of peer support was the faculty lounge. As is often the case, misunderstandings and misstatements tended to breed anger and alienation rather than resolve.

Out of this situation grew the development of the Binford Instructional Support Team. This was not simply another committee appointed by the Principal, but a carefully selected group of staff members agreed upon by the Principal and the building Consulting Teacher. The Consulting Teacher was elected by her peers to serve as a consultant in all areas of instructional problems. This position was financed by a federally funded "Consulting Teacher Inservice Project."

Selection of viable candidates for the Instructional Team was extremely important. Many factors had to be taken into consideration. What kinds of people could make what kinds of contributions? First, we considered the degree of involvement of each staff member in other school activities. We didn't want to drain off the energies of people who were already making very important contributions in other areas. We did not want to overload any staff member.

We then established the criteria for selection of potential team members as follows:

a. Team members needed to have status with the rest of the faculty; teachers who had the respect and acceptance of their peers.

b. Team members had to possess the ability to express ideas, as well as the ability to listen to others and carefully consider what they were saying.

c. The selected team members needed to be representative of a cross-section of subject areas and grade levels within the school.

Having selected a range of potential members, the Consulting Teacher approached each of them with a request to consider membership on the team. The general purposes of the Instructional Support Team were explained, and an invitation was extended to attend an orientation meeting in which the whole venture would be laid out in detail. An orientation session at school and a field day inservice training day held off site was planned and conducted with the project consultant.

At the "orientation meeting" we talked about alternative directions in which we might go, and solicited input from the total group. During the course of the meeting, it was made quite clear that any teacher could drop out of this venture if they wished without any penalty or bad feelings. We wanted teachers who wanted to be there for the purposes outlined. At that time all members elected to continue with the Building Instructional Support Team.

An all-day inservice session followed during which we held in depth discussions on the purposes and general planning of the Team Concept. Again, everyone understood that at the end of that session, they could withdraw without penalty. This was a completely voluntary activity in which the principal was not exerting pressure to assure their continued support. Again, no one dropped out. We think this was an important factor in the process of getting the team venture started. At several points during the orientation and planning, opportunities were offered for people to rethink their commitment to the venture. By allowing people to withdraw without penalty in the early stages, we were setting the stage for renewed commitment in the most difficult stage, getting the idea off the ground.

As a direct outgrowth of the discussions which were held, specific team goals were established. They were:

1. To create a forum for expression of staff concerns
2. To promote confidence and unity among the staff
3. To help the staff solve instructional problems by using resources within our own building
4. To provide an opportunity to share solutions to instructional problems
5. To plan staff development opportunities with faculty, and to serve as a vehicle for planning inservice programs in response to assessed needs.

The primary thrust of the inservice training was to get people to search their minds for answers to demanding questions and to join forces to agree upon how the Building Instructional Support Team would function to meet mutual needs.

An interesting brainstorming process was used which was very effective in eliciting responses to questions relating to the initiation of the team. The following questions were posed:

1. What do I think this team can accomplish?
2. What resources do I have which will strengthen this team?
3. What do I fear most about this venture?

Participants wrote their responses to these questions on 5 x 8 cards, one question to a card. The cards were then shuffled and redistributed so that no one was reading his/her own response. The answers were read aloud and recorded on newsprint so everyone could see them. The group then reworded the responses, and prioritized the resulting lists. It was interesting to note the high degree of commonality among answers. Much of this portion of the inservice could be described as a guided group process structuring our planning and consensus building around the Team's purposes, goals, and procedures.

Another major aspect of the inservice training involved playing a simulation called "The Diffusion Game." This exercise provided the participants with a real feel for the problems encountered when introducing an innovative idea to a group. It helped the staff understand the road-blocks that the principal must face when complex issues land on his/her desk. They begin to realize the multitude of negative attitudes one must deal with whenever something new is tried in schools. Specifically, the Diffusion Game taught about the importance of respecting the roles of certain individuals in the school including the secretary, the custodian, and potential early adopters as well as the principal. It also heightened our awareness of the importance of communication patterns within the school.

The inservice training was an essential part of getting our team venture off to a good start. Failure to pay enough attention to problems which a new venture might face is probably the biggest reason why such ventures fail. Team members felt that it was one of the best inservice training sessions they had been involved in, because it provided them with the opportunity to really experience the problems involved; it got them into the nitty-gritty of what they were about, and it demonstrated some useful methods of getting their ideas on the table, and making the best use of our own resources.

After our inservice planning sessions, we set up a communication system to inform staff about the team. We decided to try to communicate in some other way than memos, which are so often ignored. We took a look at the communication patterns of the staff, and assigned each team member to talk face-to-face with 3 people, taking advantage of natural divisions and groups among the staff. Even the principal had three people to contact. The general purposes for these contacts were to have a face-to-face discussion about the team goals, about potential agenda items for the teams consideration, and to develop support for the team concept,

At a total faculty meeting the Consultant Teacher presented the concept of the Building Instructional Support Team to the entire staff. By virtue of the individual contacts which had been made prior to this meeting, everyone had some degree of understanding of the idea. Questions and comments were solicited, and a healthy discussion followed. The fact that the presentation was made by teachers, supported by an established core of well-respected staff members, and presented as a "teacher idea" made the whole concept more palatable than if it had appeared as an edict from the administration.

The Consulting Teacher assumes the greatest responsibility for carrying out the activities of the team. It is important to note, however, that her team role is only a small part of her total job description. She spends most of her time consulting with teachers about instructional adaptations and techniques to use in their classrooms with students who have special needs. Fulfilling her team role involves building the agenda, scheduling and arranging for meetings, getting information out to the staff, and following up on instructional decisions made by the team.

During the subsequent team sessions, members of the Instructional Support Team expressed their ideas about the needs in the school which were not being met. Both general and specific needs were identified. For example, teachers expressed their general concerns about grading and student evaluation systems and reporting pupil progress to parents. More specifically, team members expressed concerns about the most appropriate manner of dealing with mainstreamed students in their classrooms, what kinds of expectations should teachers have and what kinds of educational materials are available for use in working with these students.

Part of the principal's role is to present the administrative viewpoint as clearly as possible. It is essential to avoid the onus of his/her expressions being interpreted as "edicts of the Principal." As principal, it is important to be viewed as someone who is expressing one viewpoint, and not as someone who is expressing "What I plan to DO." We did notice that some team members tried to guess what the principal thought before participating in discussions. This proved to be a block to effective communication. Consequently, we stressed open communication, equal participation and mutual sharing of ideas during team meetings. As a member of the team, the principal expresses his/her viewpoint, then the participatns freely discuss the pros and cons of different approaches and solutions. There is a tendency for staff members to react to the principal solely as the administrator of the school rather than as part of the team. Recognizing this, the team strives to be open, honest and frank throughout all team meetings.

The other members of the team play a special role in meeting our goal of open and honest problem-solving. They model the kind of frank discussion we are striving for, encouraging participating teachers (who are non-members) to be just as frank.

Team members also provide input on the agenda, and share responsibilities for constant face-to-face communication with key staff members about the activities of the team. Each member maintains constant communication with at least 3 (non-member) individuals; getting input into the team and its agenda, and getting ideas out regarding discussions, activities, and solutions of the team.

The Special Education teacher also brings special expertise to the purposes of the team. She shares her skills in working with special needs

students. She also has access to research on what works with special needs kids. She not only can offer suggestions regarding what to do with special needs kids, but she can also offer evidence and support for what works with hard-to-teach students.

It is important to note, that while the team meeting is in session, everyone is "just one of the bunch." Members and non-members alike function as colleagues attempting to find solutions to issues we face in our school. We believe that everybody has good ideas, and that we make best use of our resources when we listen to everyone's ideas. When we are successful at freely expressing ourselves and listening to what each person has to say, the whole thing begins to bubble over.

An important member of the team is the Project Consultant, who is not a member of the building staff, but rather a representative of the federally funded inservice project. He brings a special role to the team activities. He can present a "third party" point of view when needed, and can offer a more removed, objective, yet professional opinion. Since he is not a member of the school staff, and not embroiled in the day-to-day issues, the "static stays out of the line" so he doesn't get caught up in taking sides in any discussion. He represents a neutral prospective. At other times he summarizes and clarifies the various points of view being expressed by staff members. This is important to helping us understand one another, and to reach decisions on proposed solutions and actions.

As busy as everyone is, it is quite natural to wonder when the Instructional Support Team finds time to meet. All of the team members are involved in a host of other activities, both building and system wide. These people are the ones who accept professional responsibility, support the common cause, and give of themselves for intangible rewards.

Our team meets from 7:30 to 8:15 a.m. every other week. The agenda, which is limited to one or two items, is set in advance and distributed to all faculty members. The limited meeting time precludes the niceties of casual socializing, except there is always coffee and donuts or hot coffee cake for those in attendance. We seriously focus in on the important educational issues at hand.

The meetings are attended by the faculty based on their interest in the agenda items. At our first meeting, non-team members began by sitting on the sidelines, but we invited them in to sit at the table with us. Once they moved in they began to perform just like the team members. They give lots of input once they get "caught in the tide" of the discussion.

Recent reports indicate that teachers are vitally concerned about how much they get paid, but more importantly they are concerned about the school; to help control the destiny of the educational operation. We see the Instructional Support Team as a viable solution-finding process. It presents teachers with an organized option to participate in important curricular decisions. Their involvement is purely a professional and voluntary activity. Since there is no salary incentive for participation, it appears that the rewards are purely intrinsic. Perhaps involvement on the team offers the opportunity for people to exercise their leadership skills. They are provided with an opportunity to express their thoughts and solutions for problems they see, as well as the opportunity to view themselves, and to be viewed as leaders of the school.

The team was given an allocation to support special projects, resources, and release time for professional development activities. Doubtless the amount of money (approximately $750) was not large, yet it did give the team the advantage of being able to offer incentives to active staff members.

How is our school going to be different as a result of this team approach? First, we recognize that we have established some rather lofty goals and objectives. We are involved, to a degree, in attempting to affect attitudinal changes, as teachers become more and more involved in instructional problem solving. We certainly hope we will achieve our original goals; most importantly to bring unity to the staff where it was lacking before. We want people to start coming forth with solutions, not just problems. Staff members have already started changing their expectations about the principal having "answers in his hip pocket." They are taking responsibility for their part in coming up with solutions to the problems they see around them. They are becoming involved in and committed to the concept of problem solving and solution finding for the issues that arise. When decisions are made, the staff can look back and say, "See what we did." not "Look what <u>they</u> did to us."

For those principals who wish to institute the concept of the Building Instructional Support Team, we offer the following suggestions. First, be sure this is really the direction you want to go before you commit yourself. False intentions will be spotted almost from the beginning, and anything that develops will be an exercise in futility. Be prepared to get your feelings hurt when things don't go the way you wished they would. If you are going to support a team process which takes everyone's input seriously, you must be prepared to "let go." The principal gets one vote, as does each participant in the team meeting. Decisions are made democratically, with everyone making equal input.

Involvement in an Instructional Support Team <u>must not</u> be viewed as just another assigned committee by edict of the Principal. Therefore, the staff should understand that involvement in such a team is purely voluntary.

It is also very important to provide opportunities for teachers to bail out in the planning phases of the team. Offering periodic opportunities to drop out also sets the occasion for renewed commitment for those who elect to stay.

Principals wanting to replicate the team idea should be content to move slowly and cautiously. We planned our team activities very carefully, getting input from the staff frequently along the way. It was months from the time we first conceived of the idea until we actually set the activities into motion. We allowed adequate time for people to digest the various ideas, while we continued to generate support for the basic concept with the faculty-at-large.

And last it is important for someone other than the principal to chair the team meetings. It is necessary to accentuate the idea that the principal is only presenting one point of view, not laying out predesigned proposals dictating what is going to be done. The innate leadership qualities of the principal must be ever-present, but not dominant. With someone else chairing the meetings the colleagial support aspects of the team are reinforced. This emphasizes the intent that the team will provide a forum for free expression of opinions and an exploration of solution without censorship or threat.

BUILDING SUPPORT TEAMS

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When attempting to implement any innovation, skepticism must be expected. (Especially when the innovation is connected to a federal or state grant concerned with inservice.) It is natural and must not discourage the planners of the innovation. The planning which preceded the actual operation of our building support teams was long, at times tedious, but most worthwhile. Once the teams were operational, some teachers were still skeptical, but much of it had been allayed because it had been considered during the planning stage.

Building support teams can sound wonderful on paper, the difficult part is making them work in the realities of a public school. We feel the teams are working, though certainly not as we had originally envisioned them. What follows is an attempt to capsulize this year's efforts to implement building support teams in six schools in Bloomington and to share our learnings.

PLANNING: 1) Introduction of idea to consulting teachers

Concerns....when team will meet
....just another committee
....another special education committee
....teacher will not take classroom problems to peers
Learnings...when introducing the concept, stress its long, evolutionary nature
...expect resistance

2) Interview of building principal by project staff

Purpose.....learn principal's building concerns
.....familiarize principal with team concept
.....begin generating support of principal

Learning....more willingness to express building concerns in interview than at meeting with peers

3) General meeting of building principals

Purpose.....highlight ways a team can help the principal and school
.....generate support
.....share concerns generated during interviews
.....conclude by leaving it up to each principal to contact project staff about team development at their building

Concerns....no time
....incentives for generating teacher commitment
....can team problem solve better than principal?

Learnings...sharing building concerns anonymously can be effective
...principals and teachers share similar concerns

4) Meeting with consulting teacher, principal and project staff

Purpose.....individualize team concept to match nuances of school
.....define team
.....consider existing committees
.....define roles of consulting teachers, principal and project staff member
.....discuss team selection

5) Team selection

Learnings...process will vary from school to school
...broad representation
...voluntary membership

6) All day inservice session for team

Purpose.....learn decision making methods and problem solving models
.....brainstorm and prioritize goals
.....consider logistics e.g. when to meet, chairperson, team maintenance, acceptance by faculty

Learning....good starting point for operating as a team

7) Continue planning at building level

Purpose.....address planning concerns generated at inservice session
.....provide opportunity for team members to feel more comfortable at their new task
.....plan appropriate strategy for "going public"

OPERATING: 1) Introduction to staff

Purpose.....share team goals
.....stress collegial support aspect of team
.....invite staff to all meetings
.....break down "we", "they" feelings

Learnings...faculty awareness must precede presentation to staff at general meeting
...collegial support must be stressed-"we're all in this together

2) Regularly scheduled meetings

Learnings...initially, team builds own agenda
...effectively communicate team proceedings to the faculty
...discuss building wide concerns that are practical for team to undertake (load the agenda)
...inform faculty of meeting time and place

The original skepticism in most buildings has, for the most part, disappeared. The team is seen to be working on concerns common to many faculty members. Communication between the principal and staff is improving. We are hoping that teachers will begin to turn to colleagues for help and support and come to view the team as a form of inservice. This will be an evolutionary process, but during this time trust in the team should be building. Expecting a teacher to share an instructional or discipline problem with a team is rather ambitious. We feel this will be an eventuality and a natural expansion of the team's role.

4.3 Building Team Guide, Elementary Office, Grand Rapids Public Schools, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1978.

Building Team Guide

by

Elementary Office

Grand Rapids Public Schools
Phillip E. Runkel, Superintendent

1978

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INTRODUCTION

SECTION I

PURPOSE

The team approach refers to a working group of professionals representing various disciplines who provide appropriate referrals, diagnostic and remedial services to all students with special needs in the public schools.

The primary purpose of the team approach is to meet general education students' needs within the least restrictive environment and support those students enrolled in special education programs.

The desired goals are:

A. To establish a system which is capable of providing increased and more comprehensive professional support services to all students and teachers.

B. To expedite the response time interval between the initial concern and supportive staff involvement.

C. To facilitate the referral process by eliminating the need of deciding which special service to request. (Referral of the team incorporates all services.)

D. Enhance communication between:

   1. Teachers and supportive staff
   2. Building administrators and supportive staff
   3. Supportive staff disciplines
   4. Supportive staff and parents

E. Enhance communication to teachers and provide indirect supportive services to students through planning and conducting building level in-services and workshops.

F. To give the greatest possible information to the appropriate consultant before formal services begin.

G. Assure that all building level interventions are being attempted or considered.

H. Facilitate mainstreaming efforts initiated by the building administrator or Educational Planning and Placement Committee (EPPC) for maintaining special education students in regular classrooms under conditions which maximize positive interaction with peers and teachers.

SUMMARY

A team shares in planning services which help to eliminate inefficiency, duplication of effort and facilitate communication of ideas. Working together as an organized group leads to more effective decisions than working in isolation. The brainstorming which takes place on a case by case basis is more innovative and less likely to overlook important questions or to make educational planning by routinized rituals. Finally, the team approach allows members to re-energize and recieve feedback on ideas. This is important for teachers, consultants and administrators.

SECTION II

ROLE OF TEAM

To expedite as quickly as possible appropriate services for students where special concerns are expressed.

STEP I - Concern

All team referrals are to be completed and submitted by the classroom teacher. Concerns for a student may originate with any school employee or parent; these concerns are to be directed to the building administrator, who will facilitate the referral process.

STEP II - Building Administrator Approval

Referral forms are to be submitted to the building administrator who will designate a team member to make parent contact.

STEP III - Parent Contact

To activate the referral, parent contact must be made. Date of contact and parental response must be recorded.

STEP IV - Pre-team Action (optional)

The building administrator may assign team members to gather additional information prior to the initial discussion of a referral at the team meeting.

STEP V - Team Meetings

The building team meets on a date, time and location set by the chairperson (building administrator) and agreed upon by all team members. An agenda will be disseminated prior to each team meeting. The frequency of meetings depends on building needs.

STEP IV - Team Action

The assignment of team members is to investigate prior services, evaluate students, identify needs and initiate services if deemed appropriate.

STEP VII - Subsequent Action

Evaluate team action and make decisions for problem resolution; might include, but not limited to:

1. Reports from team members
2. Recommendation for further evaluation
3. Implementation of additional services

STEP VIII - Reviews

Results of all previous findings and attempts are reviewed and, if students' needs are not met, further building level alternatives or special education services can be attempted.

NOTE: The team will adhere to the guidelines described in the Michigan Special Education Code.

STEP IX - End of Year Review Meeting

At this time all referrals will be screened. Progress will be reported, need will be assessed for further planning. If satisfactory progress has been made, team services may be terminated.

SECTION III: - Team Members

Roles of Team Members - General

All team members assist in the educational programming for students referred to the team. They serve as an informational source; as a consultant in helping other team members understand the charactersitics and needs of such pupils; and by providing insightful recommendations.

All team members:

A. Collect information at the pre-team action phase when designated by chairperson;

B. Perform the duties of team secretary if designated by chairperson;

C. Consult and counsel other team members whenever appropriate;

D. Maintain individual notes on each case where he or she is responsible for follow-up actions(s);

E. Act as team contact person with the referral source and/or parent when designated by chairperson;

G. Attend all E.P.P.C.s when appropriate;

Roles of Team Members - Specific

A. Elementary Principal (Chairperson)

1. Receive team referrals and initiate pre-team action.
2. Maintain team agenda.
3. Schedule team meeting dates, time and location.
4. Attend and actively participate in all team meetings.
5. Supervise team proceedings, decisions and task assignments.

6. Appoint a team secretary.
7. Assure attendance of team members at meetings.
8. Establish team accountability procedures by assuring that tasks are assigned to specific team members and that dates are recommended for each task completion.
9. Assume primary responsibility for student attendance problems when a concern.
10. Attend test interpretations when appropriate.
11. Attend all E.P.P.C's.
13. Develop plans for class integration or mainstreaming special education students whenever possible.
13. Participate in and help organize inservice programs for building staff and parents.

B. Classroom Teacher (elementary)

1. Initiate team referrals by filling out form sections.
2. Attend and actively participate in all team meetings when student is on agenda.
3. Inform other team members of additional academic and social behavioral changes observed as the result of team interventions.
4. Provide feedback to the team as to any academic or behavioral changes observed as the result of team interventions.
5. Suggest possible remedial activities.
6. Attend test interpretations when appropriate.
7. Attend E.P.P.C's.
8. Continue communicating with child's parents throughout the team process and school year.

C. Reading Consultant (elementary)

1. Attend and actively participate in all team meetings.
2. Screen children to determine reading ability and interpret results of in-depth reading analyses to other team members, when required.
3. Interprets building reading program to team.
4. Suggest possible remedial activities.
5. Assist in making modifications in reading programs for referred students when required.
6. Report child's academic abilities in relation to peer or school standards.
7. Assist in acting as liaison between general and special education services.
8. Attend test interpretations when appropriate.
9. Attend E.P.P.C's when necessary.
10. Participate in and help organize inservice programs for building staff and parents.

D. Resource Teacher or Resource Consultant (elementary)

1. Collect information at the pre-team action phase when required by chairperson.
2. Attend and actively participate in all team meetings.
3. Provide team with information about existing special education programs.
4. Recommend and assist appropriate team personnel in regard to materials, management and teaching techniques for special needs students.
5. Through team recommendation and written parent consent, provide a thorough ten (10) day diagnostic evaluation in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains.

6. Insure that a written diagnostic report is available at all times.
7. Interpret results of ten day diagnostic evaluation to parent(s) and team.
8. Attend other test interpretations.
9. Attend E.P.P.C's.
10. Participate in and help organize inservice programs for building staff and parents.

NOTE: The resource teacher is assigned to each elementary building to provide direct and indirect services to students certified as Learning Disabled (R.340.1713), Emotionally Impaired (R.340.1706) or Educable Mentally Impaired (R.340.1705).

E. School Psychologist

1. Attend and actively participate in all team meetings when deemed necessary by chairperson.
2. Interpret previous psychological information to the team concerning the referred student.
3. Suggest possible remedial activities.
4. Through team recommendation and written parent consent, conduct a psychological evaluation of the student's cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains.
5. Interpret the findings of the psychological evaluation to the student's parent(s) and team.
6. Provide a written diagnostic and prescriptive psychological report to the student's school and copies to other team members if appropriate.
7. Assist in the planning and implementation of classroom management procedures pertaining to behavior of pupils.

8. Assist in the understanding of personality and learning theory.
9. Provide team with information about existing special education services and programs and assist in providing information regarding state and federal special education codes and guidelines.
10. Attend all E.P.P.C's.
11. Participate in and help organize inservice programs for building staff and parents.

F. School Social Worker

1. Collect information at the pre-team action phase when required.
2. Attend and actively participate in all team meetings.
3. Provide previously obtained information in regard to the student's social and family history.
4. Obtain further social-emotional and/or family history if requested by team.
5. Through team recommendation and written parent consent, begin therapeutic interventions with the student.
6. Provide social-emotional diagnosis and observations to the team.
7. Suggest possible remedial activities.
8. Help identify community resources and act as liaison between the team and social agencies.
9. Be a liaison between the team and parent(s), especially when self-contained special education programs are being considered.
10. Provide a social history for each student considered for self-contained special education programs.
11. Attend test interpretation when appropriate.
12. Attend E.P.P.C's.
13. Participate in and help organize inservice programs for building staff and parents.

G. Speech and Language Pathologists

1. Collect information at the pre-team action phase if required.
2. Attend and actively participate in all team meetings.
3. Provide previously obtained information in regard to the student's speech and/or language efficiency.
4. Through team recommendation and written parent consent, evaluate and provide remedial suggestions in the areas of articulation efficiency, language comprehension, expressive language, voice disorders, rate and rhythm of speech, and hearing acuity and auditory proficiency as related to speech and language tasks.
5. Interpret test findings to parent(s) and team.
6. Attend other test interpretations when appropriate.
7. Attend E.P.P.C's when appropriate.
8. Through team recommendation and written parent consent, begin therapeutic interventions with the student.
9. Participate in and help organize inservice programs for building staff and parents.

H. School or County Nurse

1. Collect information at the pre-team phase when required.
2. Attend and actively participate in all team meetings where deemed appropriate by chairperson.
3. Collect health information from doctors, clinics, hospitals or other agencies.
4. Provide nursing diagnosis when appropriate and other pertinent health information.
5. Suggest possible remedial activities.
6. Be a liaison between the team and community health services.
7. Serve as parent liaison in regard to health related information and recommendations.

8. Help the team and parent(s) identify community health resources.
9. Attend test interpretations and E.P.P.C's when appropriate.
10. Participate in and help organize inservice programs for building staff and parents.

I. Special Education Teacher (if assigned to building)

1. Initiate team referrals by filling out all form sections (elementary).
2. Collect information at the pre-team action phase.
3. Attend and actively participate in all team meetings.
4. Suggest possible remedial activities.
5. Attend test interpretations.
6. Communicate with student's parents as required.
7. Assist team members in the understanding of specific needs of students in area of expertise and experience (L.D., E.I., E.M.I., P.O.H.I., V.I., H.I., etc.)
8. Attend E.P.P.C's.
9. Participate in and help organize inservice programs for building staff and parents.

TEAM MEMBERS ASSIGNMENT

Name_____ Position_____

STUDENT NAME	ASSIGNED TASKS	FINDING	RECOMMENDATIONS
	Date -	Date -	Date -
	Date -	Date -	Date -
	Date -	Date -	Date -
	Date -	Date -	Date -
	Date -	Date -	Date -
	Date -	Date -	Date -

INDIVIDUAL RECORD SHEET

Teacher_____ Level_____

Student_____ Birth Date_____

Date of Referral_____ Sex_____ PEB_____

TEAM MEMBER	ASSIGNED TASKS	FINDING	RECOMMENDATIONS
Name Position	Date -	Date -	Date -
Name Position	Date -	Date -	Date -
Name Position	Date -	Date -	Date -
Name Position	Date -	Date -	Date -
Name Position	Date -	Date -	Date -

TEAM REFERRAL

School_____Teacher_____Level_____

Student_____Birthdate_____PEB_____Sex_____

Parents Name_____Parents Address_____

Telephone_____ _____

PLEASE CHECK APPROPRIATE AREA OF CONCERN

Academic_____Social_____Perceptual_____

Health_____Emotional_____

Speech & Language_____Other_____

Description of Problem:_____

_____

_____

_____

How long has problem existed?_____

Other services in past or now receiving as indicated in CA60 and date of services:

_____Sch. Social Worker_____Psych._____Resource

_____Speech_____Health

_____ _____

Teacher's Signature Principal's Signature

_____

Date of Parent Contact

Parent Reactions:_____

_____

_____

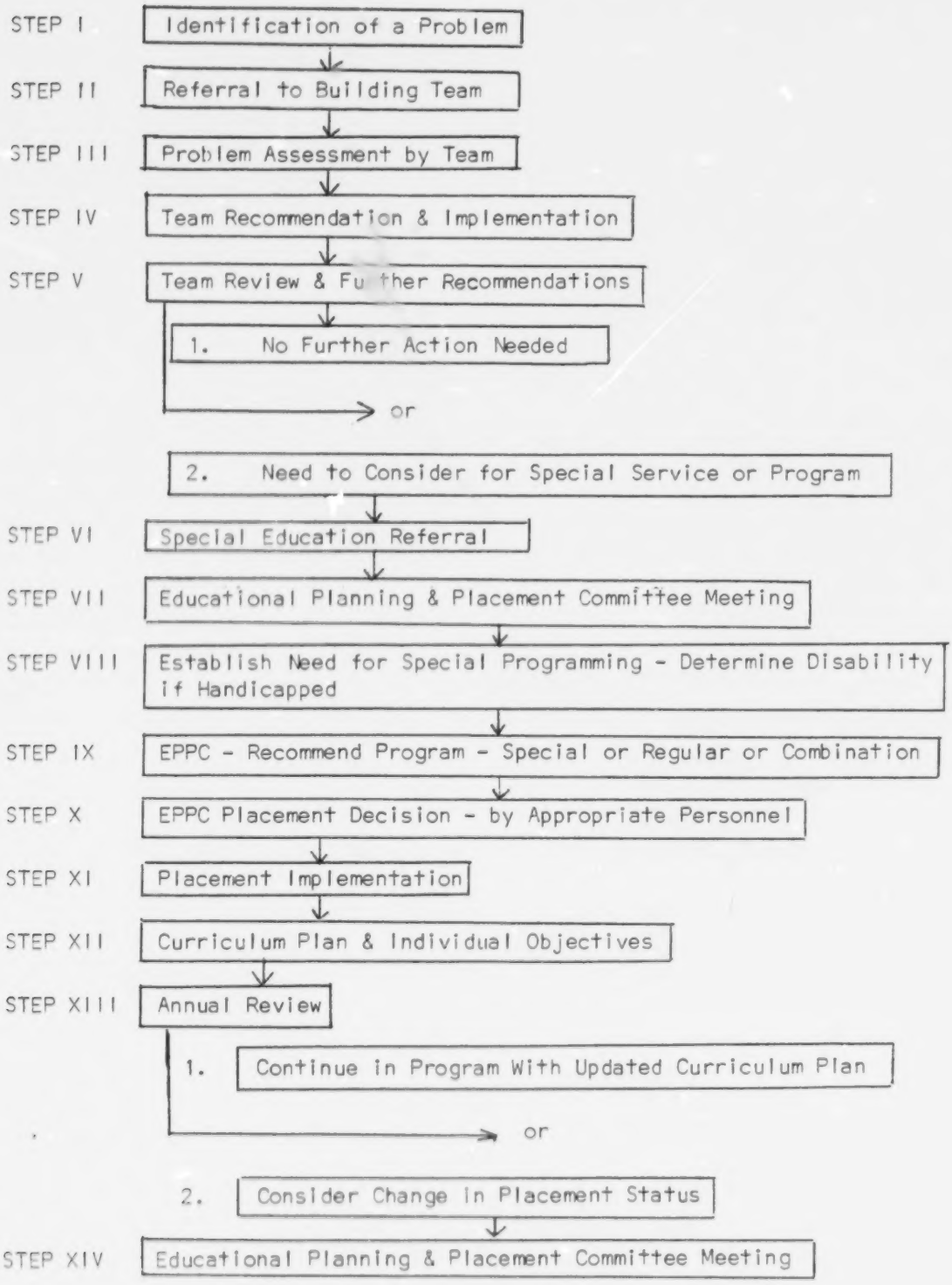

CHART I.

A Suggested Procedure for Building Educational Planning Teams.

BY Edward L. Birch

4.4 Educational Planning for Handicapped Students, Procedures Manual, Department of Special Education, Minneapolis Public Schools, 1977, III - Student Support Teams.

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Minneapolis Public Schools
Department of Special Education

III

STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM

A. DEFINITION

An effective team requires ongoing participation of all members. The team process includes informal sharing of information and formal participation through written reports and/or attendance at conferences. The type and degree of involvement of each team member will depend on the presenting problem.

Conferences are required at the decision points in the process. Persons with pertinent information should be in attendance. To facilitate effective planning, the number of participants should be limited.

Major Team Responsibilities

1. Review referral data.
2. Determine need for assessment, areas to be assessed, and the members of the assessment team.
3. Determine educational needs.
4. Determine annual goals.
5. Determine need for special education services.
6. Develop the Individual Educational Plan.

B. COMPOSITION

Some personnel are essential participants throughout the process. Others are needed at specified stages of the educational planning process:

Essential Personnel
at all Stages of the Educational
Planning Process

School Social Worker

Classroom Teacher(s)

Special Education Teacher

Administrator or Designee

Parents

Other persons considered necessary by the parent or team

Essential Personnel When Appropriate

Speech Clinician	Counselor
Police Liaison Officer	Title IV Personnel
Probation Officer	Title I or Title VI Tutors
Social Agency Representative	School Psychologist
Aide	School Nurse
Referring Person	Student

City-Wide Special Education Resource Person

Special Needs Coordinator (SNC)

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Representative (DVR)

Program Coordinator or Department Chairperson

Person from same background or knowledgeable about racial, cultural, or handicapping differences of the student (at the parent's request)

C. ORGANIZATION AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

There are some basic decisions each school will need to make at the beginning of the school year. These include some procedures to be followed and assignment of duties. The decisions should be made in relation to the organization of the school, staff availability, and staff utilization patterns.

Responsibilities should be distributed among several staff members. One person may assume two or more roles if they are related to that person's other duties.

Decisions to be made:

1. Select a standard meeting time and place; allow flexibility to accommodate needs of individual parents.
2. Select the SST Manager for the school year.
3. Select the Referral Coordinator for the school year.
4. Determine membership of the Referral Review Committee.
5. Determine when and how classroom teachers are to be released to attend conferences.
6. Decide how pre-conference team responsibilities are to be handled.
7. Establish procedures for:
   a. Selecting the person to chair the conferences. One person may chair all of the conferences during the school year or the duty may be assigned on a rotating basis.
   b. Assigning the note-taking duties at conferences. The chairperson should not be responsible for these duties.
   c. Selecting the Process Manager for individual students.
   d. Selecting the IEP Manager for individual students.
   e. Handling parent notifications.
   f. Determining services needed by transfer students.
   g. Selecting team members.
8. Assign responsibility and decide procedure for reviewing team process with total staff.

D. ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

Student Support Team Manager - the person responsible for the administrative functions of the SST. This person may or may not be the SST chairperson.

Responsibilities:

1. Develop an agenda so that all important items will be discussed.

2. Schedule conference at time and place mutually agreed upon by school and parents.
3. Notify conference participants.
4. Send goldenrod copy of Student Referral Form to Special Education when decision on assessment is made.
5. Maintain due process records in a central location within the school.

Process Manager- the staff person responsible for monitoring compliance with the mandated due process procedures for a specific student through the maintenance of Due Process Checklist. The process manager may be any staff member so designated by the SST. Responsibilities:

1. Record the completion dates and other items specified on the Due Process Checklist.
2. Monitor compliance with time requirements as specified on the Due Process Checklist.
3. Arrange for parent notification at the appropriate times.
4. Monitor parent notification procedures.
5. Attach the appropriate supporting documents to the Due Process Checklist.
6. Send IEP copies to appropriate places.

Referral Coordinator - the person designated to receive all referrals. Responsibities:

1. Receive referral requests in the school.
2. Notify principal of referrals.
3. Collect and organize data and/or background information.
4. Convene the Referral Review Committee.

IEP Manager - the staff person with the major responsibility for the monitoring of the Individual Educational Plan for a specific student.

Responsibilities:

1. Complete the IEP forms with the information from the educational planning conference.
2. Give the IEP forms to the Process Manager.
3. Be the parent's contact person concerning the IEP.
4. Be responsible for seeing that the Individual Instructional Plan is written and attached to the IEP in the student's file.
5. Arrange for periodic reviews and reassessment.

Referral Review Committee - two or more delegates of the SST, such as the principal, SSW, counselor and special education teacher. Responsibilities:

1. Review background information.
2. Recommend areas to be assessed and assessment team members to SST.

E. PROCESSING REFERRALS

Referrals to the Student Support Team may be made at any time of the year. The review process should be initiated soon after a referral is received so that the assessment decision may be made within a reasonable amount of time. Some referrals may be processed in the spring for special education services to be delivered in the fall. The Student Support Team in each school should decide upon the number of spring placements appropriate for its school.

Points to be considered are:

1. The service allocation for the following school year.
2. The grade span of the school.
3. The stability of the school's population.
4. The type of program in the school.

5.0 Summary section:
Federal Projects currently dealing with
the Team Concept in Special Education

Abstracts from NIN 'SCAN' Computer Search

5.1 Title: Regular Education Inservice: Special Education - General Education Cooperative Plan

Contact Information: Fred Baars, VI-D, Consultant
Division for Exceptional Children
S.D.P.I., Raleigh, N.C., 919-733-6081

Description: This project is developed to implement a model for coordinating inservice training for generalists working with exceptional children. The model focuses upon developing assistance teams in 80 school buildings in Wake County. Through this method, teams are trained to support general educators and help them develop their own inservice plans.

Goals: A. To emphasize team building which will develop skills and support for integrating exceptional children.

B. To assure team members have skills to assist general educators with assessment, referral and programming for individual children.

C. To develop support systems in each building so inservice training builds on identifiable competencies of an established plan.

Project No: 451AH90265

5.2 Title: Regular Education Inservice: Project IMPACT (Inservice Management Plan for Assisting Classroom Teachers)

Contact Information: Dr. Cathy Crossland
402 Poe Hall
North Carolina State University
Raleigh, N.C., 919-737-3221

Description: This Project is designed to provide inservice training to regular classroom teachers in North Carolina. Trainers are members of school-based assistance teams and are released during the school day to attend sessions at N.C.S.U. In turn, they return to their buildings capable of providing modularized training to fellow staff members. (This project is a collaborative effort with the N.C. State Dept. Project described on the preceding page.)

Goals:

A. To select a set of comprehensive special education competencies for regular education teachers.

B. To develop and conduct an assessment of the special education competencies for regular education teachers.

C. To develop a set of teacher training modules for regular education teachers.

D. To develop a multiplier training system using the modules and existing assistance teams.

E. To evaluate the effectiveness of Project IMPACT activities on the teachers trained.

Project No.: 451CH90737

5.3 Title: Regular Education Inservice: Handicapped Personnel Preparation

Contact Information: Jan P. Maxwell, Delaney Center
800 S. Delaney
Orlando, Florida, 305-422-3200 Ext. 507

Description: This project trains regular teachers and principals, through the Intervention-Implementation-Dissemination Approach (I-I-D), skills needed for integrating handicapped students. Central to the I-I-D approach, these educators become part of a school based facilitation team.

Goals: A. To increase the practice of providing education for handicapped students in the L.R.E.

B. To improve attitudes, understandings and skills of all professionals dealing with handicapped students.

C. To increase professionals abilities to raise non-handicapped students sensitivity to handicapped peers and to help handicapped students understand their responsibility for integration.

Project No: 451CH90736

5.4 Title: Inservice Training: A Comprehensive Program to Prepare Regular Classroom Trainers, Early Childhood Trainers, Paraprofessionals and Parents as Instructional Teams to Work with Handicapped Children in the Regular Classroom Setting.

Contact Information: Brenda Rogers, Atlanta State Univ.
Special Education Department
223 Chestnut St.
Atlanta, Georgia, 404-681-0251 Ext. 287

Description: This model utilizes the "total school" approach, training the entire school staffs of two elementary schools to work effectively as a team to provide services to handicapped children in a regular classroom setting. This is a competency and field-based modularized training program operated in conjunction with Atlanta Public Schools.

Goals: A. To develop and test an inservice training model in Atlanta Public Schools for the entire staff and parents.

B. To develop a functional team approach for working with handicapped in regular education and to develop interpersonal skills needed for teaming.

C. To train regular education teachers to work with handicapped and to develop positive attitudes toward them.

Project No: 451CH90733

5.5 Title: Project: It's Great

Contact Information: Dr. Michael Hannum
University of Tennessee, College of Ed.
Knoxville, Tennessee, 615-974-2321

Description: This university project proposes to train ten teams of three individuals and offer 15-18 hours of credit for certification purposes. An administrator, regular education and special education teacher are selected by an LEA in East Tennessee based on their capabilities of influencing change.

Goals: A. To provide inservice to three person teams.

B. To thereby improve educational opportunities for handicapped children.

C. To train the teams to be able to direct inservice training in their own buildings and LEA's.

Project No: 451CH90570

5.6 Title: REGI: Phase II Metro Twin Cities Inservice Education Team

Contact Information: Jean Zilisch, College of St. Thomas
Department of Special Education
2115 Summit Ave.
St. Paul, Minnesota, 612-674-5178

Description: This university project trains six Inservice Education Teams to facilitate inservice training for mainstreamed handicapped children in six districts in the Metro Twin Cities Area. Members of these teams are: A principal, a regular education teacher and a special education teacher. Team members are trained to provide inservice in their building and other buildings upon request. Personnel selected for this project will be trained to assume roles.

Goals:

A. To select and train six Inservice Education Teams each consisting of a principal, a regular teacher and a special education teacher.

B. To design individualized education programs for each team member to obtain a license and qualify for a Masters Degree in Special Education.

C. To provide necessary training for the IET member to design inservice for regular educators and others.

D. To disseminate the inservice education techniques and materials developed in the IET's.

Project No.: 451AH90256